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illustrated calendar.

How Did Musk Become So Powerful?

Social media is rapidly displacing legacy media as the primary way Americans get information. No one should pretend that they are neutral town squares; rather, they are political actors that can influence the outcome of elections. The real problem is that they are too big and powerful. So were the three over-the-air TV networks in their heyday, but their political influence was checked by the FCC and old-fashioned norms about media neutrality. No such constraints exist today for the large platforms in online space.

Musk's purchase of Twitter for \$44 billion was derided at the time as a very bad business decision, and with its subsequent loss of market value, it seemed like that was true. But Musk wasn't purchasing the platform for economic reasons, nor was he interested in defending free speech as he suggested. Rather, he wanted to buy political influence, which he did in spades. X turned from being a slightly left-of-center platform to becoming a MAGA megaphone, which Musk uses many times a day to broadcast his own political opinions. It plus the \$250 million he donated to the Trump campaign did a lot to help Trump get elected, and Trump has now given him political roles as co-head of DOGE and all-purpose advisor. There is no need to document the huge conflicts of interest Musk will be able to benefit from in his present role, given the importance of the federal government to Tesla and SpaceX.

Excerpted from Francis Fukuyama on substack.com January 13, 2024



American Atheist 2025 National Convention

American Atheists will hold its 2025 national convention on April 17 through 29 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

You register and can find details at <http://convention.atheists.org>.

You can find out more about American Atheists and their work at <https://www.atheists.org>

Humanist Forums

Forums are held 1st and 3rd Sundays at 11:00AM at the Mountain View Senior Center at 266 Escuela Avenue, other forum locations will be announced online. All forums are simultaneously available on Zoom.

You can get both the Zoom location and venue from meetup.com/humanistcommunity.



EVENTS IN SILICON VALLEY

HUMANIST COMMUNITY

www.humanists.org

February 2025

Sunday

Mon.

Tues.

Wed.

Thur.

Fri.

Sat.

<p>2 11:00 AM Sun The Rise of the Ultra-Right in the US <i>video and discussion</i></p>	<p>3 GERTRUDE STEIN 1874</p>	<p>4 CHARLES DICKENS</p>	<p>5 7:15 PM Freethought Discussion Book Group For on line location Carl Angotti 408-739-5046</p>	<p>6 7:05 PM Academic Video For location call Carl Angotti 408-739-5046</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>1 8 2 8</p> <p>JULES VERNE The Race Who Saved Tomorrow</p>
<p>9 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Sunday Forum Bay Area SkeptiCamp <i>free conference</i></p>	<p>10</p>	<p>12 DARWIN 1809</p>	<p>12 7:15 PM Freethought Discussion Book Group For on line location Carl Angotti 408-739-5046</p>	<p>13 7:05 PM Academic Video For on line location Carl Angotti 408-739-5046</p>		<p>Susan B 1732 Anthony</p>
<p>16 11:00 AM Sunday Forum A Look at the 1954 Seattle Windshield Pitting Epidemic <i>Susan Gerbic</i></p>	<p>Died 1909</p> <p>Geronimo</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19 7:15 PM Freethought Discussion Book Group For on line location Carl Angotti 408-739-5046</p>	<p>20 Academic Video For on line location Carl Angotti 408-739-5046</p>	<p>21 11: AM Ethics Discussion Ethical Culture Society</p>	<p>George Born 1732 Washington</p>
<p>23 11:00 AM Sunday Forum TBD</p>	<p>24 Madi</p> <p>Gras</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 7:15 PM Freethought Discussion Book Group For on line location Carl Angotti 408-739-5046</p>	<p>27 Academic Video For on line location Carl Angotti 408-739-5046</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>November is Native American Heritage Month</p>